

## Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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FOR IEU, IMV; FOR P&C

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC, UR

SUBJECT: BICENTENNIAL FILM FESTIVAL

REF: (A) USIA 11692 (B) USIA 10958 (C) MOSCOW 5949

1. IN LONG MEETING APRIL 21, ALEKSANDR SLAVNOV, CHIEF OF GOSKINO'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT, MET WITH P&C COUNSELOR TO DISCUSS EMBASSY'S NOTE OF JANUARY 6, PROPOSING A BICENTENNIAL FILM FESTIVAL IN MOSCOW BEGINNING ON JUNE 15.

2. IT WAS IMMEDIATELY DECIDED THAT A JUNE DATE WAS NOW OUT OF THE QUESTION. INFORMALLY, IT WAS AGREED THAT AN OCTOBER DATE TO BE DECIDED LATER WAS THE FIRST PRACTICAL OCCASION FOR AN OFFICIAL US FILM FESTIVAL.

3. THAT IS, IF ONE IS AT ALL FEASIBLE; FOR SLAVNOV RATHER QUICKLY STATED THE SOVIET POSITION: GOSKINO IS PREPARED TO ORGANIZE AN EXCHANGE OF FILM FESTIVALS WITH THE US, ALL COSTS TO BE BORNE BY THE RECEIVING SIDE. IN RETURN FOR GOSKINO'S HOSTING THE BICENTENNIAL FILM FESTIVAL, THEY WOULD EXPECT SIMILAR COURTESY IN US IN 1977, WHEN THEY WOULD SEND A FILM FESTIVAL TO COMMEMORATE THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION. IN

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FACT, GOSKINO SUGGESTED AN ANNUAL EXCHANGE OF WEEK-

LONG FILM FESTIVALS BE INCLUDED IN 1977-79 ANNEX TO THE CULTURAL AGREEMENT -- ON A RECEIVING-SIDE-PAYS BASIS. SLAVNOV SPECIFICALLY REJECTED THE PROPOSITION THAT SENDING SIDE PAYS, NOTING DISCREPANCY BETWEEN HIGH US AND LOW USSR COSTS.

4. P&C COUNSELOR OUTLINE PRACTICAL DIFFICULTY ORGANIZING IN US KIND OF FESTIVAL SOVIETS ENVISAGE. TO MAKE THE POINT CLEAR, SLAVNOV'S DEPUTY, MIKHAIL CHKALIKOV, EMPHASIZED THAT SINCE GOSKINO WOULD HANDLE BICENTENNIAL AND OTHER US FILM FESTIVALS "PERFECTLY," GOSKINO WOULD EXPECT US SIDE TO DO "EQUALLY WELL" ON BEHALF OF SOVIET FESTIVALS, I.E. PROVIDE ADVERTISING, GREET VIP GUESTS, ARRANGE SEMINARS, PROVIDE HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS, FIRST-CLASS THEATERS, ETC.

5. AS BACKGROUND TO FIRM SOVIET POSITION, EMBASSY NOTES THAT SOVIETS SEEM TO BE ASSURED SEVERAL SMALL, PRESTIGIOUS "ARTI-FILM" FESTIVALS IN US EVERY YEAR, THROUGH ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN SOVIET INSTITUTIONS AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTES, THE KENNAN INSTITUTE AND MUSEUMS SUCH AS MOMA IN NEW YORK. THUS, AT VERY LITTLE FINANCIAL OR ORGANIZATIONAL COST, THE SOVIET FILM INDUSTRY IS ASSURED A FAIRLY STEADY RUN OF THEIR BETTER, ALTHOUGH OLDER, FILMS. FURTHER, ACCORDING TO PROFESSOR FRED STARR, (NOW IN MOSCOW) THE KENNAN INSTITUTE'S NEXT SOVIET FILM WEEK IS SCHEDULED FOR THE AUTUMN ON "SOVIET CONTEMPORARY FILMS."

6. COMMENT: (A) THE EMBASSY'S PROPOSED JUNE BICENTENNIAL FILM FESTIVAL IS DEFINITELY OUT. AFTER MONTHS OF DELIBERATION, THE SOVIETS HAVE DECIDED THAT A FULL EXCHANGE IS THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE ARRANGEMENT. AS FAR AS FILM FESTIVALS, OR FILM WEEKS, ARE CONCERNED, THE SOVIETS HAVE A CLEAR AND EVEN GROWING ADVANTAGE. ONLY IN THE SCREENING OF COMMERCIAL FILMS DOES THE US LEAD, ACCORDING TO SOVIET CLAIMS. ALTHOUGH GOSKINO DISCLAIMS ANY COMMERCIAL PURPOSE IN SUGGESTING ANNUAL FILM FESTIVALS, IT SEEMS CLEAR THEY FEEL A HIGH-PROFILE WEEK OF CON-

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TEMPORARY SOVIET FILMS WOULD HAVE A BUSINESS SPINOFF (B) INCLUSION OF THE PROPOSED EXCHANGE IN THE CULTURAL AGREEMENT WOULD FURTHER SATISFY THE SOVIET PENCHANT FOR REGULARIZING ALL EXCHANGES, FOR PRESSING WHATEVER CAN BE DESCRIBED AS CSCE-ORIENTED INTO THE FRAMEWORK OF A BILATERAL AGREEMENT, A "GOOD OLD" AGREEMENT BETTER THAN A NEW ONE. SLAVNOV REMINISCED RATHER POINTEDLY ABOUT THE INTENTIONS OF THOSE (LIKE HIMSELF) WHO HAD WORKED

ON THE BASIC LACEY-ZARUBIN AGREEMENT, AND OF THE  
LATER BROKEN PROMISES OF THE MPAA TO COOPERATE WITH  
THE SOVIET FILM INDUSTRY.

(C) IN THE CASE OF THE CULTURAL AGREEMENT, IT HAD  
ALWAYS BEEN THE SOVIET INTENTION, ACCORDING TO SLAVNOV,  
TO INCLUDE FILM EXCHANGES AT SOME TIME. IT WAS THE USG  
WHICH HAD RENEGED ON THIS EARLIER INTENTION.

(D) USIA/DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS SOLICITED ON FEASIBILITY  
EXCHANGE AS DESCRIBED. FULL-SCALE FILM WEEK HERE, ON  
WHATEVER TERMS, CAN BE ASSURED MAJOR IMPACT ON BOTH  
SELECTED INVITEES AND GENERAL PUBLIC.  
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